

Dec 5 2005 - CULTURE OF CORRUPTION FACT CHECK #2

CULTURE OF CORRUPTION FACT CHECK #2

Randy "Duke" Cunningham & Culture of Corruption

MYTH:

Randy "Duke" Cunningham's case is an isolated scandal of individual's misjudgment:

"[B]oth sides have sides have done it. It doesn't relate to anything other than the individual and his fall from ethical standards." [Washington Times editor and former Newt Gingrich Chief of Staff Tony Blankley on "Hardball with Chris Matthews," 11/29/05].

"'Cunningham is a minor factor in all [t]his,' said one Republican pollster, who spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to freely discuss party positioning on this most-sensitive of issues. 'His actions can't be blamed on a 'culture of corruption' but instead on personal stupidity.'" [Chris Cillizza, "Rep. Cunningham Enters Guilty Plea, Resigns," The Fix, washingtonpost.com's politics blog, 11/28/05]

FACT:

The Duke Cunningham case epitomizes the Republican culture of corruption in Washington, highlighting the urgent need for the GOP leadership's to start enforcing the House ethics rules and investigating the widely reported and serious corruption scandals:

At least 10 Republican congressional lawmakers including indicted former Majority Leader Tom DeLay received thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from defense contractors linked to Cunningham case: Here is a list of congressional Campaign Contributions from

"Co-Conspirators" from Cunningham case, 2001 - 2005:

NAME	AMOUNT
------	--------

Rep. Randy Cunningham (R-Calif.)	\$66,000
----------------------------------	----------

Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.) \$32,000

Rep. John Doolittle (R-Calif.) \$30,000

Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas) \$30,000

Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) \$28,500

Rep. Virgil Goode (R-Va.) \$28,250

Rep. Jerry Weller (R-Ill.) \$20,000

Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-Texas) \$12,500

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) \$11,250

Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho) \$10,000

[Josephine Hearn, "Co-conspirators' largesse extended to many," The Hill, 11/30/05]

A report linked two other prominent senior House Republicans, who received huge contributions from a Cunningham "Co-Conspirator," to Pentagon contracts awarded to the defense contractor: [Matt Kelley & Jim Drinkard, "Contractor spends big on key lawmakers," USA Today, 11/30/05]

Cunningham-defense contractors ring scandals is a part of the Republican culture of corruption on Capitol Hill. As many as 60 congressional lawmakers may be linked to the corruption scandals engulfing the Capitol Hill : "You know, Duke Cunningham got caught, but the question many Americans are asking is, how deep is the congressional cesspool? Six members are currently under investigation for possible crimes and ethics violations. And some reports say the number could go as high as 60. What in the heck is going on in the nation's capital?" [Joe Scarborough on "Scarborough Country," 11/29/05].

The nature of the Cunningham-defense contractor ring scandal is strikingly similar to the Westar scandal, linking a powerful energy company's questionable campaign contributions to political groups associated with indicted Tom DeLay and a host of other prominent Republican lawmakers on the Hill. [Thomas B. Edsall and Juliet Eilperin, "Democrats, Group Seek Probe of GOP," The Washington Post, 6/7/03]

Republican Senator John McCain expressed his concern about the ethics scandals within his own party yesterday on NBC's Meet the Press: "I don't think the Ethics Committees are working very well. The latest Cunningham scandal was uncovered by the San Diego newspaper, not by anyone here...." [Senator John McCain on NBC's "Meet the Press," 12/4/05]

Even former Speaker Newt Gingrich is tired of the Republican culture of corruption epitomized by Abramoff and Cunningham: "Gingrich said he was deeply troubled by the resignation Monday of Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, R-Calif., and by the widening bribery and ethics investigation into the activities of lobbyist Jack Abramoff. "Frankly, it sickens me," Gingrich said. He called on Republicans to lead on ethics reform." [Glen Warchol, "Gingrich implores GOP to 'clean it up'," The Salt Lake Tribune, 12/2/05]

Despite the mount of corruption scandals, the ethics committees in Congress still sitting on sidelines: "There is no ethics enforcement in Congress today, and it's inexcusable." [Tom Fitton, President of Judicial Watch, a conservative monitor of government ethics, Jeffrey H. Birnbaum, "In a Season of Scandals, Ethics Panels Are on Sidelines," The Washington Post, 12/5/05]

Cunningham scandal is not just an isolated case of individual misjudgment. It along with widening Abramoff scandals epitomize the worst of culture of corruption in Washington. These scandals highlight the urgent need for the GOP leadership's to start enforcing the House ethics rules and investigating the widely reported and serious corruption scandals.